United Nations

Press Release

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MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Security Council approves guidelines for enforcing arms embargo against Iraq. Decides that Iraq should bear cost of destroying proscribed weapons.

- Secretary-General reports that United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission is fully established and carrying out tasks in accordance with Security Council.

- Special Committee against Apartheid holds solemn meeting in observance of International Day of Solidarity with Struggling People of South Africa (Soweto Day).

- New round of talks opens in Cuernavaca between representatives of Government of Guatemala and Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca .

- Office of United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator reports 35 people killed by volcanic eruptions in the Philippines.

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The Security Council this afternoon decided that the full cost of the destruction of proscribed weapons within Iraq, as outlined in its resolution 687 (1991), should be borne by the Government of Iraq. It took that action by unanimously adopting resolution 699 (1991), in which it also requested that the Secretary-General submit, within 30 days, recommendations on the most effective means by which Iraq might meet those obligations.

The Council also decided to encourage the maximum assistance, in cash and in kind, from all Member States, to ensure that the destruction of those weapons was undertaken effectively and expeditiously.

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Also this afternoon, the Council approved a set of guidelines to facilitate full international implementation of the arms embargo provisions of its resolution 687 (1991). It took that action by unanimously adopting resolution 700 (1991).

The items proscribed include all forms of conventional weapons and military equipment; all chemical and biological weapons; all ballistic missiles with a range greater than 150 kilometres; and nuclear weapons or nuclear-weapons-usable material. Also proscribed are research, development, support and manufacturing facilities for those items; repair and production facilities for ballistic missiles concerned; technology under licensing used in the production, utilization or stockpiling of proscribed items; and personnel or materials for training or technical support services.

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The United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM), set up to oversee the demilitarized zone between the two countries, is now established and fully able to carry out the tasks assigned to it by the Security Council, according to Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar.

In a report to the Council, the Secretary-General said that since UNIKOM was established on 9 May, there had been instances in which personnel of the armed forces of both Iraq and Kuwait were observed in the demilitarized zone. These observations had been brought to the attention of the parties concerned, which had explained that the majority were due to errors of navigation or misunderstandings over the boundaries of the zone.

A further review of the strength of the force will be undertaken in October and recommendations made to the Security Council about its future in the area.

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The Special Committee against Apartheid held a solemn meeting today in observance of Soweto Day, known officially as the International Day of Solidarity with the Struggling People of South Africa.

The day marks an incident 15 years ago, when hundreds of black schoolchildren were killed or wounded by the South African police during a peaceful demonstration against an inferior system of education.

Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, in a message read out by Sotirios Mousouris, Assistant Secretary-General of the Centre against Apartheid, said this year's observance was occurring at a time of

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unprecedented change in South Africa. Since last year's observance, dramatic developments, both positive and negative, had taken place, ensuring that the issue of apartheid remained a subject of intense world attention.

The Secretary-General went on to say that it was unfortunate that the commemoration this year of Soweto Day should take place against a backdrop of increasing violence in many parts of South Africa. He called for immediate remedial action by all parties concerned in order to avoid the very serious consequences, not only for the negotiation process but for the future viability of the country as a whole, that might result from the violence being left unchecked.

Also addressing the meeting, the Chairman of the Special Committee, Ibrahim A. Gambari (Nigeria), said the political process now appeared to be at risk due to unfulfilled promises and escalating violence. It would be a tragedy, he said, if the fragile process which had been launched were detailed. A premature lifting of all international pressure would be counterproductive, "if not downright dangerous", the Chairman stated. While South Africa's positive steps should be encouraged, they did not yet justify the lifting of international pressure, which assisted, rather than impeded, the process of negotiations, he said.

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A United Nations official announced today that a new round of talks opened this morning in Cuernavaca, Mexico between the Government of Guatemala and the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG). The talks will deal with the first items of the general agenda agreed upon in Mexico on 26 April, namely, democratization and human rights. The official said that under the procedures agreed on between the Government and URNG, the talks were being held in the presence of the Conciliator, Monsignor Rodolfo Quezada Toruño, and the Secretary-General's representative, Francesc Vendrell, acting as observer. The talks were scheduled to continue throughout the week.

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The Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator (UNDRO) reported today that 35 were killed last week when intense volcanic eruptions hit the Philippines.

The agency said in a press communique that there had been widespread damage and that the airport had been closed due to poor visibility. Roads surrounding the volcano were knee-deep in ash, UNDRO said, and several bridges had been destroyed. Local scientists reported that about 1 million people were in danger. The United States Clark Air Force Base had been evacuated and some 80,000 people were sheltered in emergency centres and under tents, UNDRO said.

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